

PROPOSED USE OF THE PLENARY POWERS TO SUPPRESS THE SPECIFIC NAME "EUROPAEUS" LINNAEUS, 1758, AS PUBLISHED IN THE COMBINATION "SCORPIO EUROPAEUS" AND TO DESIGNATE FOR THE GENUS "SCORPIO" LINNAEUS, 1758 (CLASS ARACHNIDA) A TYPE SPECIES IN HARMONY WITH ACCUSTOMED USAGE (AMENDMENT OF A RULING GIVEN IN "OPINION" 104)

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The object of the present application is to ask the Commission to use its Plenary Powers to such extent as may be necessary to provide the genus *Scorpio* Linnaeus, 1758, with a type species in harmony with accustomed usage and thus to make it possible to substitute a revised entry relating to this name on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology* for the very unsatisfactory entry made under the Ruling given in *Opinion* 104 when this name was first placed on the *Official List*. The facts of this case are set out in the following paragraphs.

2. When Linnaeus established the genus *Scorpio* (1758, *Syst. Nat.* (ed. 10) 1 : 624), he placed in the genus so named five nominal species, of which the first species was *Scorpio maurus* (: 624) and the fifth was *Scorpio europaeus* (: 625). Linnaeus neither designated nor indicated a type species for this genus. The first author to select one of the originally included species to be the type species of this genus was Latreille who in 1810 (*Consid. gén. Anim. Crust. Arach. Ins.* : 424, 118) so selected what he called "*europaeus* Fab.", i.e. *europaeus* Linnaeus, since Fabricius never himself published such a name, this name as used by him always being attributed to Linnaeus.

3. By the Ruling given in its *Opinion* 104 (1928, *Smithson. misc. Coll.* 73 (No. 5) : 25—28) the Commission placed the name *Scorpio* Linnaeus, 1758, on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology* with *Scorpio europaeus* Linnaeus, 1758, as type species.

4. When in 1943 I was engaged in a preliminary survey of the entries so far made on the *Official List* with the object of estimating the amount of further work which would be required before the *List* as so far compiled could be published in book form, I encountered difficulties in regard to the name *Scorpio* Linnaeus, as I could not find that the name *europaeus* Linnaeus was currently applied by specialists in this group to a species of this genus. I accordingly consulted Mr. R. J. Whittick who was then in charge of this part of the British

Museum collection. Owing to the difficulties at that time arising from war conditions (including the evacuation of much of the library at the Museum), Mr. Whittick was unable to clear up this matter but he confirmed that it would require further examination before the *Official List* was published. Following the resumption in the autumn of 1954 of active steps to prepare the *Official List* for publication I consulted Dr. G. O. Evans who by this time had succeeded Mr. Whittick in charge of the Arachnida at the British Museum. In a letter dated 12th January 1955, Dr. Evans kindly furnished the following information:—

Type species of "Scorpio" Linnaeus

- (1) The name *europaeus* Linnaeus, 1758, is not currently applied to a species of *Scorpio* Linnaeus.
- (2) In recent specialist works on the Scorpiones the species *Scorpio maurus* Linnaeus is considered the type species of *Scorpio*. I am in full agreement with this.
- (3) The genus *Scorpio* is placed in the family SCORPIONIDAE Pocock, 1893 (ref.: "Notes on the Classification of Scorpions, followed by some observations upon synonymy, with descriptions of new Genera and Species". Pocock, Oct. 1893, *Ann. Mag. nat. Hist.* (6) 12 : 305).

5. I have since (10th February 1955) had a further discussion in regard to this case with Dr. Evans who confirms that the unfortunate type selection by Latreille, by reason of its early date (1810), is without doubt the first such selection to be made for this genus and informs me that the first author to accept as its type species *Scorpio maurus* Linnaeus, the species now universally accepted as such was Karsch (F.) (1879, "Scorpionologische Beiträge", *Mitt. Münch. Ent. Ver.* 3 : 20). Dr. Evans considers that in the interests of maintaining stability and of putting an end to the unfortunate situation created by Latreille's type selection for the genus *Scorpio* Linnaeus, it is desirable that the Commission should use its Plenary Powers for the purpose of setting aside that selection and validating *Scorpio maurus* Linnaeus as the type species of this genus. Dr. Evans is of the opinion that it is desirable that the same opportunity should be taken to suppress the specific name *europaeus* Linnaeus, 1758, this ancient *nomen dubium* serving no useful purpose, representing, as it does, a potential threat to stability in nomenclature in view of the risk that at any time some author might claim to be able to identify the species so named by applying to this name the provisions of Article 31 of the *Règles*.

6. It is clear from the information kindly furnished by Dr. Evans that the entry on the *Official List* relating to the name *Scorpio* Linnaeus must be revised before the *List* can be published in book-form and that the revision of that entry by the use of the Plenary Powers to designate *Scorpio maurus* Linnaeus to be the type species of this genus would accord with the current practice of specialists

in this group and thus promote stability, while at the same time providing the nominal genus *Scorpio* Linnaeus with a determinate content which by reason of having an unrecognisable species as its type species it at present lacks. I agree also with Dr. Evans that it is very desirable that the potentially dangerous *nomen dubium europaeus* Linnaeus should be suppressed and thus deprived of power to cause confusion in the nomenclature of this group at some later time.

7. I accordingly recommend the Commission :—

(1) to use its Plenary Powers :—

(a) to set aside all selections of type species for the nominal genus *Scorpio* Linnaeus, 1758, made prior to the Ruling now asked for and, having done so, to designate *Scorpio maurus* Linnaeus, 1758, to be the type species of this genus ;

(b) to suppress the specific name *europaeus* Linnaeus, 1758, as published in the combination *Scorpio europaeus* for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy ;

(2) to substitute the following entry for the name *Scorpio* Linnaeus, 1758, on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology* for that made therefor by the Ruling given in *Opinion* 104 :—

Scorpio Linnaeus, 1758, *Syst. Nat.* (ed. 10) 1 : 624 (gender : masculine)
(type species, by designation under the Plenary Powers (under (1)(a) above) : *Scorpio maurus* Linnaeus, 1758, *Syst. Nat.* (ed. 10) 1 : 624) ;

(3) to place the under-mentioned specific name on the *Official List of Specific Names in Zoology* :—*maurus* Linnaeus, 1758, as published in the combination *Scorpio maurus* (specific name of type species of *Scorpio* Linnaeus, 1758) ;

(4) to place the under-mentioned specific name on the *Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology* :—*europaeus* Linnaeus, 1758, as published in the combination *Scorpio europaeus* and as suppressed under the Plenary Powers under (1)(b) above ;

(5) to place the under-mentioned family-group name on the *Official List of Family-Group Names in Zoology* :—SCORPIONIDAE Pocock, 1893 (type genus : *Scorpio* Linnaeus, 1758).